

Wisconsin Environmental Regulations

Even extremely small businesses may release pollutants into the air, water or ground. It is important for you to be aware of any environmental rules that apply to your business **BEFORE** you begin any new construction or begin operating your business. Failure to comply with environmental regulations can result in large fines, civil liabilities, and delays. Will your business be affected by environmental regulations? Look at these “trigger” questions below.

Air Pollution Permits

Will you use materials or have activities that may generate air pollution? If you answer yes to any of the following questions, you may need an air pollution “construction permit” from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

- Will you use adhesives, paints, inks, other solvents, or solvent-containing materials?
- Will you heat with any fuels (not including electricity) such as wood, oil, or natural gas? How large will your boilers, ovens, furnaces, etc. be?
- Will you be doing any grinding, sanding, welding, material handling, or any other activity that creates dust or fumes?

Hazardous Waste Regulations

New businesses generating any kind of hazardous waste must manage, store, and dispose of the waste properly. Depending on the type of waste and how much your facility will generate, certain hazardous waste requirements may apply.

- Will you use chemicals in any of your production processes?
- Will you have used engine oil, anti-freeze, batteries, or any other similar wastes generated from forklifts, cars and trucks?
- Will your wastes be ignitable, corrosive, reactive or toxic?

Solid Waste Requirements

Wisconsin businesses are required by state law and local ordinances to set up a recycling program for certain materials (glass, cans, paper, cardboard, etc.).

Stormwater Permits

To prevent the movement of pollutants to Wisconsin’s water resources by ways of runoff from new businesses, DNR issues stormwater construction permits. You may need a permit prior to site construction depending on the type of business you own and the size of any new construction.

- When constructing your business will you disturb one or more acres of land?
- Will you be engaging in any heavy or light manufacturing?

Wastewater Permits

Wastewater permits control the movement of pollutants to Wisconsin’s surface water, groundwater, wetlands, or any other “waters of the state” from certain kinds of businesses. A permit may be needed depending on how and where you discharge the water from your facility.

- Will your business discharge water?
- Will your discharge flow into a municipal sewage treatment plant (also called a POTW or publicly owned treatment works)?

Water Supply Requirements

When starting a small business, you will need to consider all of your water needs and from where your water will come. Special testing requirements may apply to your business based on the answers to these questions.

- Will you be able to hook up to a municipal water system or will you need to install a new well?
- Will you have 25 employees or more?
- Will you need a water system to serve customers or the public?

Environmental Resources

Wisconsin offers many different programs and resources to help you determine which environmental rules, requirements, and permits may apply to your business.

Environmental Permit Primer - www.dnr.state.wi.us/permitprimer

The DNR has designed a Web site to take you through the various DNR regulatory programs to determine what environmental requirements apply to your business. The site also guides you through the application process for air, stormwater, waste water, solid and hazardous waste, and water supply permits.

Wisconsin P2 Partnership - <http://wip2.uwex.edu/>

The Wisconsin P2 Partnership, a one-stop resource for pollution prevention (P2) and compliance assistance, provides help to Wisconsin businesses and citizens to use pollution prevention and waste reduction to achieve and exceed compliance with environmental regulations.

Small Business Clean Air Assistance Program – www.wienvirohelp.com

The Small Business Clean Air Assistance Program (SBCAAP), housed in the Wisconsin Department of Commerce, helps small businesses understand and comply with environmental regulations. The free, confidential, and non-regulatory program specializes in compliance with air pollution and air permitting requirements and offers a wide variety of publications. Call 608-264-6153 for more information.

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources – www.dnr.state.wi.us

The DNR has staff members devoted to the different environmental programs all around the state. Visit the DNR's searchable staff directory at www.dnr.state.wi.us/staffdir/SearchCounty.asp to find a specific program contact near you. Detailed information on the different environmental programs is available at www.dnr.state.wi.us/environment.html.

Business Sector Specialists-

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/cea/assistance/bsector/whoare.htm

Within the DNR, Business Sector Specialists act as conduits into the DNR through their work with various industrial and commercial sectors. They will often serve as a first point of contact for these businesses, providing coordinated, cross-media technical, and compliance assistance.

Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center - www1.uwex.edu/ces/shwec/

The staff of the UW-Extension, Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center provide quality environmental education, information, and technical assistance for industry and communities throughout Wisconsin.